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ABSTRACT

The particular advantages and opportunities of the urban-based consortium are examined by several consortia directors in a special issue of this newsletter. The first article, by Joseph G. K. Miller of the Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education, suggests ways in which trustees enhance the cooperative effort in an urban setting. In the second article, by Richard Arrington, Jr., of the Alabama Center for Higher Education, focus in on the advantages for service to minority urban residents through cooperative efforts of the urban academic institutions. H. Parker Lansdale, of the Higher Education Center for Urban Studies, explores opportunity for service to the urban communities through cooperative efforts that would probably not be available to individual institutions. In the fourth article Howard Johnston, formerly of the Associated Colleges of Central Kansas, discusses potentials for cooperative efforts between urban and rural consortia for program development. Lloyd J. Averill, of the Kansas City Regional Council for Higher Education, describes the advantages of location to academic cooperation among consortia members. Finally, Lansdale also describes the experience of the Bridgeport consortia with a HUD-funded experimental program, the Urban Observatory Program. (LBH)

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ACQUAINTER

SPECIAL ISSUE - FALL 1977

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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The Urban Based Consortium

This special issue of the ACQUAINTER is directed at the particular advantages and opportunities of the urban based consortium. As an organization it has unique advantages of geography in being able to provide an instrument for its member institutions to work together with maximum opportunities for face-to-face contacts and program development. In addition, the consortium provides opportunities for the institutions to do certain things together in relation to their communities and their population centers which are not generally available either to them individually or to widely dispersed general consortia or special interest consortia who cover a wide geographic area.

Our Board of Directors has asked a group of distinguished consortia directors to share with our readers their insights, as well as their experience, on these special opportunities presented by consortia of institutions in urban settings.

The first article suggests ways in which trustees enhance the co-operative effort in an urban setting. Written by Joseph G. K. Miller, Executive Director, Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education, it describes the ways in which trustees of member institutions, who have a variety of other community contacts with each other, support the cooperative process through their own informal communication system.

The second article, written by Dr. Richard Arrington, Jr., Executive Director, Alabama Center for Higher Education, focuses on the particular advantages for service to minority urban residents through cooperative efforts of the urban academic institutions.

In the third article, the editor explores opportunity for service to the urban communities through cooperative efforts which probably would not be available to individual institutions in the same manner as a joint cooperative outreach might afford.

Howard Johnston, the former Executive Director of the Associated Colleges of Central Kansas and a former member of our Board, discusses potentials for cooperative efforts between urban and rural consortia for program development.

Lloyd J. Averill, Executive Director of the Kansas City Regional Council for Higher Education, one of our largest and most successful consortia, describes the advantages of location to academic cooperation among consortia members. He discusses in some detail the Kansas City experience and the advantages that sheer proximity in an urban setting provides for enhancing cooperation among colleges and universities.

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Finally, the editor describes in some detail the experience of the Bridgeport consortium with an experimental program operated by the National League of Cities with special funding under contract with the Department of Housing and Urban Development -- the Urban Observatory Program.

Western man has yet to discover ways of rewarding efforts at cooperation. We know how to recognize people who rise to the top in their profession or by their leadership make their organizations "number one." Number two, even for AVIS, is an unenviable position. What we describe in these short pages is in rather sharp contrast to the norm in American higher education. We hope it will help the reader and others to search for new ways for more effective use of our higher education resources for the well being of our citizens, particularly the urban-suburban community.

H. Parker Lansdale, Ph.D.
Editor, Special Issue
Director, Higher Education Center
for Urban Studies

Consortia in Urbia

(Not a Latin Motto -- By Any Translation)

By their very nature, voluntary consortia of academic institutions are involved in matters of interest to their members. This common interest is the bedrock of mutual understanding and is the foundation of all consorting. It applies to the inter-linked relations among any and all schools at all times.

By their own mission statements, universities and colleges are primarily interested in teaching students and in advancing knowledge by scholarship and research. Accordingly, this is the area where the majority of consortia can operate and where they necessarily must concentrate. In fact, to be of finite, measurable and demonstrable value to constituent institutions and to evaluators, the consortium collectively should be able to deliver some educational services better, more efficiently, or less threateningly than its members can.

With this as preamble, one looks at educational institutions in an urban setting and at the consortia which serve them and finds the current performance trending in several directions.

First - directly related to mission, is a wide-ranging set of cooperative activities:

- Sharing facilities, students, faculty -- in some cases -- loosely; in other cases -- contractually; and in still others -- approaching what amounts to a functional merger.

- Cooperative expansion of service - This generally concerns what is called "outreach" and carried education to the consumer in many places. Sometimes it is in the home via television, other times the class is carried to the audience in a variety of off-campus geographical settings: centers, plants, offices, secondary school buildings, even motels.

- Joint Research - Colleges and universities cooperate to blend and join their expertise and satisfy complex study requirements which no one of them could undertake alone. Mass transit and pollution control are examples.

- Innovative and sometimes reactive adjustments to curricula. Experimentation in new fields of educational offerings is frequently undertaken jointly. Should failure result, the consequences can be minimized. Should success result, another structure (frequently not a consortium) could result. New thrusts in Administration of Justice and Public Health Technology are current illustrations of reactions to new perceived needs.

Second - consequential to institutional operations, another series of cooperative activities can be identified:

- Economies of scale - especially in library, computer, insurance, purchasing and book store operations, there can be high expectations that joining several institutions or engaging a consortium-wide activity will result in cost savings or cost avoidance.

- Expanded services - In the realm of student services, colleges joining together can attract a lecturer, schedule a symphony, or sponsor an expensive entertainment that no one of them could singly afford.

Third - The urban setting is a backdrop for a wide variety of civic undertakings. In this mileu, many other expectations are raised:

- Colleges are expected to cooperate with cooperators.

- Colleges are expected to provide leadership -- even solutions -- to some of the thorniest problems (many political) that are extant. They are expected to conform to an urban environment and fulfill the American dream of providing a ladder to upward social mobility and assisting in uplifting the human, social and economic conditions -- no small task!

- Colleges are categorized (and sometimes vilified) for being non-profit and are stereotyped with other non-taxpaying institutions. In this case, when attacked they must band together in a "Circle the Wagons" defense.

- Colleges can be coerced. In the first instance, government may be the agent. But there is "open season" on colleges and the resources they command for all manner of pressure groups and a variety of organizations that claim a "cause." They demand action and support. In the annals of education, the Morrill Act of 1861 with its establishment of the land-grant colleges and the emphasis on the agricultural and mechanical arts is regarded as a landmark. No less a landmark is the retrospective realization among educators that, in the mid 1950s in this country, urbanization became a major fact in national life.

The great engines of change producing the national urban transformation were World War II, with all that it entailed, and the fantastic growth in technology and the industrial and service economy that followed it. These forces provided shock waves in the economic life, migration of people, even changes of social values.

Colleges and universities were flush with their contributions to the victory in war and were greatly respected by the public for their contributions in suggesting new directions for government policy, even to civil rights rectifications. But they, too, had to adjust -- urbanization overwhelmed them -- presented new problems: new students to teach - new generations and new social problems.

Crisis, fantastic change, revolutionary change buffeted colleges and universities at all levels of existence and governance, but nowhere so directly as at the very top.

An era of student unrest, even violence, bursting on campus in the 1960s brought several unforeseeable results:

- Drastically curtailed tenure in office for many chief executives.

- Drastically lessened social regard and prestige for higher education's "function."

- Challenges to the decision-making authority.
- Intensive internal search and research for "meaning."
- Boldness on the part of local, state and national government, at intervening in an area previously considered to be a sanctuary.

To an unusual degree, these currents and these pressures focussed on the institutional trustees. This focus was dictated by the corporate assignment to trustees of legal responsibility for their institutions -- and a vigorous consumerist activity which sought out responsible parties for decisions, confrontations, and lawsuits. Trustees accordingly, bore much of the brunt of the social, student and activist pressures.

In the case of a few consortia, notably the Quad-Cities Graduate Center, the Washington Metropolitan Area University Consortium, the Union of Independent Colleges of Art, The Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education, and the University Center at Harrisburg, lay trustees of members or civic trustees serve on the Consortium Boards of Governance. Most other consortia are governed by trustee boards of professionals, usually Presidents and Deans.

But trusteeship exposes the recipient to the unusual pressures mentioned earlier. The trustee is the focus whether he serves with an institution or a consortium.

How can he react? From what vantage point can he discharge his responsibility? How can he protect and advance his institution? Where does he fit in this new situation of urbanization? Can he, should he, and does he help the fragile linkages of a consortium of institutions?

Typically, the trustee is a lay person. In the case of public institutions, he may be a political person, politically appointed. In some cases, he may be a church person or an educator.

He is a civic leader. He has his own life work to do -- he is limited to time available to devote to charity or civic work, and very frequently he has multiple and sometimes multiple, multiple "outside" roles to perform.

The "multiple, multiple" role is illustrated by the fact that three trustees of one consortium served on the boards of two educational institutions and one trustee served on three boards. In the urban setting, this interlocking is increased when one looks at membership on college boards and then notes that the same members frequently serve on hospitals, symphonies, charities and civic boards.

A trustee serving on three boards could be expected to have unusual empathy for a consortium director who also networks that number or more institutions. Trustees serving on more than one board could also be expected to share experience from one institution to another -- and this too is in the interest of trustee expertise as nurtured by the Association of Governing Boards and is in the tradition of consorting.

The traditional trustee duty of representing the community interest to his institution should be relatively direct, except for the unfortunate complexity of interests in an urban environment and the proliferation of voices that claim to speak for it. The even more traditional trustee duty of fund

raising, likewise, should be direct, but the competing claims of many non-profit fund raisers result in Christmas traffic jams. A trustee faces problems of priorities if his university, his hospital, his opera and his consortium all want him to tap fund resources on their behalf.

Complicating the institutional role of the trustee is the question: How can he perform in a multi-institutional network -- to the benefit of all, and without a potential conflict of interest?

Referring back to the introductory "one, two, three" of cooperative activities, he can (and should):

- Ask his president and faculty to report progress on cooperative educational endeavors. He should ask what linkages his school has established with others to further the activities that can be shared or jointly undertaken. He might even propose adoption of a policy regarding cooperation.

- Support everything, especially in a consortium base, that can conserve resources, save money, or expand services to his institution.

- Encourage the college to relate to the opera (at least in the music department), or the college participation in the civic "United Way Campaign," or the college energy saving as part of the national effort. Other efforts may be exerting the leadership role in helping the handicapped or assisting in equal employment -- trustees must exercise a role in all those programs and activities. (There are hundreds of other opportunities.)

Trustees who perform dedicated service on committees do advance the public interest and do help and support their institution. Those who work with consortia have a relatively more complex role and a more diffuse constituency to serve. Trustees need to be diligent in seeking answers to questions and in pressing for cooperative actions that pass the test of "common sense" or prudency.

In the end, a trustee has no place to hide. He has the ultimate responsibility.

Joseph G. K. Miller, Executive Director
Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education

Higher Education Consortia: Opportunities for Service To Minority Urban Residents Available Through Cooperative Efforts of Academic Institutions in Urban Settings

America's urban centers, with few exceptions, are experiencing the nation's most serious maladies. The increasing deterioration of our cities characterized by population decline, crime, substandard housing, high rates of unemployment, and eroding tax bases, is now demanding national attention and special allocations of national resources. Eighty percent of our nation's population resides in our larger cities. Three out of four of our nation's minorities reside in the inner core of our urban areas. It is in the inner city of the urban areas where the most acute problems are found. The serious problems which plague our urban areas are in large part reflections of the problems which have for so long plagued America's largest minority groups. With the increasing concentration of minorities in our inner cities, the problems have likewise become concentrated there.

Institutions of higher learning located in urban settings have always claimed a special interest and responsibility in serving the urban area of which they are a part. A significant number of these urban institutions have sought to provide this service in one manner or another. These institutions have been quick to recognize the advantages of the urban setting as a learning laboratory for faculty and students. Many have seized upon this advantage for academic enrichment and linked it, as it should be, to the institutions' missions of service to the community. Thus, for urban institutions, the urban area has been a learning resource and a resource for fulfilling a mission of community service.

The urban areas today, with all of their diverse problems, are no less an important resource for urban institutions of higher learning. In fact, the magnitude of urban problems provides urban institutions of higher learning with even greater opportunities and challenges for service. Since urban problems are largely reflections of problems suffered by minorities, it dictates that more attention to serving urban residents become a greater part of the service-oriented mission of institutions in urban settings. For many of the urban-based institutions, including some with a historical mission of service to minorities, the greater focus on ways to serve minority residents will take them into service areas which have been neglected by them and are consequently, new for them. Stronger linkages between urban colleges and minority urban communities should represent a new order priority.

Because the problems of minority urban residents are many and diverse, the resources of a single institution, even if it is a large university, are likely to have little impact on any facet of the problem undertaken. Seldom will smaller institutions of higher learning acting as individuals gain maximum advantage of opportunities in urban areas for learning and serving. The magnitude of the urban problems, the opportunity for learning and the opportunity for learning and the opportunity for greater service favor an inter-institutional approach. Cooperation between urban-based institutions maximizes resources and service opportunity and can be viewed as indispensable for the development of an effective urban-oriented program for smaller institutions of higher learning. All of the arguments often put forth in support of interinstitutional cooperation are most valid for the urban-oriented program. Better organization and coordination, greater cost effectiveness, inter-disciplinary and wider multi-disciplinary involvement in program planning and implementation and overall effective resource utilization characterize a learning-service oriented urban based consortium program.

The eight member colleges of our consortium, the Alabama Center for Higher Education (ACHE), have been planning and implementing cooperative learning-service programs in urban areas for the past five years, with a particular focus upon low-income and black residents. A brief description of several of these programs follows.

The Cooperative Academic Internship Program (CAIP) in Urban Studies

CAIP has its major foci on placing student interns with human service agencies serving large numbers of minorities and providing technical assistance to urban minority communities on specific problems, through the use of faculty and student interns. The latter focus is new, but is working successfully in a similar program serving developing black rural communities.

CAIP is structured around a single internship placement bureau and teaching-learning centers in the urban centers of Birmingham, Huntsville

and Tuscaloosa. The program (1) permits placements for internships to be arranged and coordinated through a single office, avoiding duplication of labor and competition among ACHE schools and allows the schools to compete more successfully with the larger universities for quality internship placements; (2) assures the development of quality placements of a sophisticated nature; (3) provides an efficient and economic solution to a common problem of the colleges and (4) provides a source of enrichment for faculty, as well as students, which has positive implications for the faculty's role in curriculum development. The program averages 200 participants per academic year, but has the potential for handling a much larger number of students and faculty.

Community Acceptance Program (CAP) - CAP is in its third year of operations. It is designed to assist ex-offenders who have served time in the state penal system in becoming re-oriented to the urban community of Jefferson. Counselors in the program begin working with inmates from the target communities prior to their release from the penitentiary. The program provides the client with counseling services, on-the-job training with community agencies and support services such as temporary housing and essential medical care.

CAP is one of two pilot projects sponsored by ACHE colleges to explore ways in which institutions of higher learning might become involved in helping to solve community problems related to repeat offenders and recidivism.

Special Veterans Program (SVP) - Each urban area contains a high number of low-income minority veterans, particularly those of the Viet Nam era. In fact, one of the most problem plagued groups of today's urban community are veterans of the Viet Nam war. The colleges provide, through the centralized SVP, extensive veterans counseling and specialized training, ranging from GED to college training, for the educationally disadvantaged veteran. The program, now in its sixth year, focuses on the urban area of Birmingham. It has also provided the same service for urban areas of Montgomery and Tuscaloosa (Alabama). An average of 500 veterans per year avail themselves of this service.

Gerontology Training Program - The ACHE colleges have jointly accepted the responsibility of providing specialized training in Gerontology for minorities in Alabama who provide service to the elderly, with a special emphasis on devising more effective means of serving the minority elderly. Three ACHE colleges have been designated as "lead institutions" in the training of personnel in gerontology at other ACHE schools and predominately black community colleges.

Cultural Enrichment Program - Cultural enrichment activities targeted at the state's minority population are a part of ACHE's annual community service effort. The ACHE colleges cooperate in weekly productions of a minority-oriented Educational Television Program, "Profiles of Black Culture." An annual choir festival highlighting black contributions to spiritual music and the ACHE college choirs, is held in one of the state's large urban centers. Likewise, the ACHE colleges' Annual Student Art Festival is exhibited in several of the state's larger cities and in the state's largest Museum of Art.

All of these activities are designed to enrich the state's cultural activities with a specific view towards a cultural enrichment for blacks.

The above programs are some examples of ways urban institutions may enhance their service to minority urban residents through cooperative efforts. There is another advantage of such cooperation for the participating colleges -- that is the solicitation of funds for support of such activities. Many potential funding sources view with favor serious efforts to pool their resources in order to provide more effective service. Therefore cooperative programs may enable institutions as a group to tap sources of support which are not readily available to individual institutions. This, too, has to be a serious consideration in an education market confronted by spiraling inflation and dwindling resources.

One final comment on urban-oriented service programs as they relate to the future of historically black institutions of higher learning and many other small institutions. Colleges in these groups are constantly being called upon to answer questions about their future, essentially their ability to continue to exist. The promise of future viability for many of the colleges in this group may lie in developing more community-service oriented programs. Such programs can become fertile grounds for academic enrichment for faculty, students and curriculum, while at the same time allowing the institution to turn out a product keenly aware of community needs and honed to serving many of those needs. Few institutions choosing this route will be able to mount adequate individual efforts, but serious interinstitutional efforts offer promise. The need, both institutional and community, the opportunities and economics will lead to more cooperative efforts.

Dr. Richard Arrington, Jr.
Executive Director
Alabama Center for Higher Education

The Urban Based Consortia: Opportunities for Community Service

The urban based consortia provide a unique opportunity for responding to particular community needs on behalf of the academic institutions in which the institutions exist. To be sure, every institution has its basic community service program rendered by students, faculty, and administration in a wide range of informal services, as well as more formal agreements with goverment, the business community and the non-governmental sector. The consortium offers a channel for unified service and unified response that can pinpoint an articulate, effective response on behalf of all of the member institutions.

The first area logically is in the marriage of the research opportunities of the urban community with the research interests of the faculty and students. The most creative element of this program for the Higher Education Center for Urban Studies has been the Urban Observatory Program (see page 16).

A second, though more modest program, was funded by the Office of Education under their small research grants for research development -- in our case the Connecticut Consortium on Research Development (CONNCORD). In the CONNCORD program we offered grants up to $1,000 (no remuneration to faculty) for expenses in conducting a wide range of small research or community based projects over a period of two years. Some of these included:

- "Educational Survey of Spanish-Speaking Families," Professor John F. Greene, University of Bridgeport.

- "Mercury in Lobsters and Other Organisms from Bridgeport, Connecticut Harbor," Professor John M. Cianci, Sacred Heart University.

- "Joint Field Project in Developing a Data Bank Based on Census Trends in the Urban-Suburban Areas of Fairfield County," Professors Harry Fishman and Donald Greenburg, Fairfield University.

- "A Field Study of the Perceptions of the Teacher's Behavior in Adult Literacy Classes in the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut." Dr. Edward C. Keane, Housatonic Community College.

- "Study of Health Facilities in Hamden, Connecticut," Professor Shalom Endelman, Quinnipiac College.

- "Computer Application to Local Government," Professor John Raglan, Western Connecticut State College.

- "The Unemployed: A Social Psychological Inquiry into a Surplus Population," Dr. Dorothea B. Braginsky, Fairfield University.

- "Needs and Resources of Higher Education in Fairfield County," Mrs. Velma A. Adams, Greenwich, Connecticut.

- "Mobilizing a County-Wide Development Effort for Fairfield County," Dr. Hyung C. Chung, University of Bridgeport.

- "The Job Outlook in Fairfield County Today and Tomorrow," Herbert Harris, Connecticut Manpower Executives Association.

- "Fairfield County Communications," Edwin C. Kepler, Private Consultant.

- "An Overview of the Transportation Systems Within Fairfield County," Dr. Anthony N. Palazotto, University of Bridgeport.

A second major focus of the consortium in community service has been the opportunity to concentrate and target academic resources on the problems and opportunities facing low income, disadvantaged families and their offspring who are potential college students. By combining the resources of the Office of Education Special Services program, Community Development Block Grant (formerly Model Cities), and now Concentrated Employment and Training Act (CETA) funds for scholarship, the consortium has been able to function as agent for its member schools in the Bridgeport area. In addition to providing as high as $60,000 in scholarship funds, the consortium staffed a special unit under a Higher Education Opportunities Program to work with the students from disadvantaged neighborhoods assisting them with the admission problems, problems of financial aid, as well as their ongoing tutorial and counseling needs while they were in the institutions. This special assistance alleviated some of the pressures on the limited counseling and guidance services of the member institutions, particularly in the case of the students with the greatest need.

A third major service area has been that created by the opportunities that provide special programs for service to veterans. Through special grants from the Office of Economic Opportunity (now CSA), Action for Bridgeport Community Development funding has been made available for a special staff of three persons to recruit and counsel Vietnam era minority veterans in particular, and all veterans in general, in the Bridgeport, Norwalk and Stamford

areas. The State Personnel Department also provided funds for full-time students who are veterans to serve on a part-time basis as recruiter/counselors, reaching out into the community persuading veterans to take advantage of the G.I. Bill. More than 650 veterans have been enrolled in colleges and universities through this outreach program.

A fourth opportunity has been provided by the coordination of an off-campus job activity under the work-study program for the member schools in what has become the Urban Corps of Greater Bridgeport. This special program has been developed to provide off-campus work stations for college work-study students working not only in the city of Bridgeport municipal government but also in the private non-profit agencies of Fairfield County. Through this program eligible work-study students have an opportunity to work fifteen hours a week during the school year and forty hours a week while not in school to supplement the basic financial aid package of the institutions they are attending, providing a source of income to the students and a source of qualified personnel for the departments of the city and the private non-profit agencies of the community.

With the help of a small grant provided by the State Department of Children and Youth Services, a fifth program area had evolved. Twenty students from the Bridgeport based member schools of HECUS have worked on a one-to-one basis with youth discharged to the "back home" situation, but still under the care of the Department. Supervised by a mature graduate student of the University of Bridgeport, this program has attempted to provide a friendship base with an older person for each individual under the care of the program.

A major portion of the HECUS efforts has been that of serving as a channel for service by the colleges and universities to the community-at-large. The director has represented at various times higher education in the Area Agency on Aging, Health Planning Council, Health Systems Agency, Regional Mental Health Council, the United Way, and served as the academic liaison chairman of the Chamber of Commerce. HECUS has been the channel through which many community agencies, as well as the community-at-large, have reached out to secure the services of the academic institutions.

Finally, a consortium can provide a unique response mechanism that could not be available to any one institution. Two such experiences come to mind in the nine years of this consortium -- Model Cities and Connecticut Health Plan. In the former, the director of HECUS served as the coordinator of all of the resource personnel provided by industry, government and the academic institutions to work with the Model Cities residents in the summer of 1969 in developing the first funded Model Cities program in Connecticut as well as developing the higher education and the evaluation components of the total program. Any one institution providing that leadership would have been suspect, but the director of the consortium was seen as neutral to the institutions and as having the interest of all of the member institutions in mind rather than any one particular college or university. It is the neutrality of opportunity that is provided by the consortium leadership on behalf of the institutions that is significant to note in such opportunities.

In the second case -- the Connecticut Health Plan -- the consortium was called on by a team from a local hospital which had just completed a feasibility study to explore the possibility of creating a community based, prepaid group practice -- Health Maintenance Organization (HMO). The investigating team had determined that a hospital based HMO was totally unfeasible but that a community based organization would be quite possible, but that the organization

would need the sponsorship of a neutral body if it were to be successful. The study team turned then to the consortium which accepted the responsibility and developed the first community based HMO in the United States whose sponsorship was that of the institutions of higher education in the community. The process was expensive in terms of time and staff, and would probably have been impossible to do on the part of any one member institution; but, having a staff jointly shared by all in the consortium, the academic institutions could afford the investment to bring this alternative health care delivery system to the community and make it operational in March of 1977.

In short, the consortium offers groups of colleges and universities in one community, or in contiguous communities, and instrument for certain kinds of service that no one of them could afford by themselves, nor would they trust each other in development if each were to do it singly. The consortium offers an opportunity to maintain the competitive relationship among the institutions in the community and still provide an instrumentality for joint services and common activities on behalf of the best interests of the community-at-large.

Dr. H. Parker Lansdale,
Editor, Special Issue
Director, Higher Education Center
for Urban Studies

Potentials for Cooperative Efforts Between Urban and Rural Consortia for Program Development

Directors of urban consortia undoubtedly find enough difficulty in establishing programs without having to consider cooperation with rural consortia. Rural consortia, however, need the help of urban consortia and in turn have something to offer.

American roots are in rural living (over 90% in Jefferson's day) and hundreds of American colleges were established with the idea that a retreat from the busy city aids learning. There is still something to be said for this idea especially in this decade when many persons are seeking a more reflective, slower-paced life style.

The great majority of Americans, however, now live in cities. Many who attend rural colleges come from cities. Most of the graduates of rural colleges, moreoever, will be spending their lives in cities. Modern education, furthermore, calls more for involvement than retreat.

Rural colleges are not serving their students well if they keep them on campus for four years. This is especially true for students majoring in business administration, teaching or social sciences. It is true, also, for any student because of the broadening influences that cities offer should be part of every student's education.

For small rural colleges to set up programs in distant cities, even through their own consortium, is difficult. It is much better for the urban consortium to take the leadership in program development with the rural consortium as a collaborating partner. The urban consortium is in a much better position to mobilize city resources. By reaching out to the country cousin the pool of ongoing participants is broadened, some narrowing of the urban-rural gap is accomplished and the urban consortium gains "Brownie" points from government or foundation donors for large vision. Moreover, through such coopera-

tion the universities of the urban consortium can strengthen their search for graduate students.

The potential for rural programs for urban students is undoubtedly more limited but in the years ahead there might well be opportunities for rural consortia to lead out with programs of environmental and energy research (sun and wind) or of simplified living that would have great appeal to urban students whose horizons could be enlarged by a month or a semester in the country.

Several examples of consortia rural-urban cooperation could be cited but the field is still wide open; most of what needs to be accomplished along these lines lies in the future.

Dr. Howard W. Johnston
Former Executive Director of the
Associated Colleges of Central Kansas and
former member of the CIL Board

Cooperation in an Urban Setting

In his 1974 report on voluntary consortia, Franklin Patterson observed that "only a very few (consortia)...appear to be entering into anything like close joint educational planning and operation. Even in the best of these, institutional autonomy and self-interest remains the predominant pattern, and cooperative endeavors appear thin" (pg. 28).

I have no reason to think that a purely descriptive assessment of the situation today would be any different; but the context for consortium work, and the institutional imperatives with which we work, have changed palpably since Patterson made that observation, and we ought to be less content to accept our failures to achieve genuine program articulation than we once were.

The study on which Patterson's publication was based apparently took place between 1971 and 1973; and while colleges and universities had begun, at that time, to feel the pinch of reducing enrollments and total income, most of them had not yet faced the full crisis into which the immediately following years would lead them. In 1972, for instance, community colleges were still the young bulls of higher education; but now the behavior of many of them is decidedly bearish. Public higher education generally, once envied by private institutions because it was apparently insulated from crisis by legislative powers of taxation, is now widely engaged in the decremental budgeting which hit independent colleges somewhat earlier.

All of which is to say that academic autonomy and instructional self-sufficiency are now luxuries which none but the most favored can afford. If academic strength is not to diminish or deplete, other resources must now be relied upon, and there is no other apparent place to go except to a larger measure of academic resource-sharing among institutions whose geographical proximity predisposes to good effect.

Voluntary consortia ought to be, if not the agents of change, then at least its active insinuators, and the time has clearly come for us to insinuate again into our cooperative strategies the possibility of an academic resource-sharing beyond anything we could have dared, in earlier years, to suggest.

Limitations of space make it possible here to do little more than offer a check-list of such possibilities, and to hint at a strategy which may move us beyond the modest levels of our earlier achievement. The following list suggests some of the major forms which articulation, most of it for the support of academic programming, can take in a situation of reasonable proximity among the participants (which is to say, most especially among essentially urban consortia).

Some forms involve the negotiated sharing of resources held by individual institutions; for example:

- Joint instructional programs, where each participating institution bears distinct responsibility for an aspect of the program for which it possesses special competence (e.g., a master's-level program in arts management, bringing together a college of art and other institutions which can contribute the financial management and administrative components of the program, enriched by internships with orchestras, museums, and other cultural institutions in the urban community). A joint program belongs, in effect, to all of the participating colleges.

- Complementary instructional programs, where participating colleges agree to divide among themselves those curricular offerings where enrollment is scarce or equipment is expensive (e.g., you do romance languages, we'll do classics; we'll do dental hygiene, you do nursing). Complementary programs belong to their individual institutional suppliers.

- Shared faculty, especially in instructional fields of low student demand.

- Shared equipment or facilities, especially where they are expensive or redundant (e.g., television production and instruction facilities; dormitory rooms).

- Student cross-registration is essential to the support of joint and complementary programs, and is both useful and feasible even where there is no systematic, planned articulation at work. Reciprocal agreements may involve, e.g., one cross-registered course per student per semester during the course of his undergraduate career, and/or one full residential semester in any undergraduate career, with no exchange of instructional funds (KCRCHE and others have found that this can work even in the presence of significant tuition differentials).

- Common academic calendars facilitate the movements of students and faculty, and the use of shared equipment and facilities, among cooperating colleges.

- Shared problem-solving resources, drawing experienced consultants on critical institutional needs from the participating institutions and from the consortium staff, and sharing the cost of expert consultants imported from outside the area.

- Information exchange, especially on the common indicators of institutional health. Other forms of articulation and resource sharing will take place, not on individual campuses but at central locations under consortium administration; for example:

- Central instructional programs, where courses given at the center are adopted by each participating institution as its own, and are so listed

in its catalogue (e.g., KCRCHE's Urban Center, whose semester-long classroom and field instruction in social work and social gerontology have supplemented on-campus offerings in those fields and have been carefully articulated with them).

- Cooperative academic-service centers, which meet the needs of participating colleges more cost-effectively, and perhaps with more instructional efficiency, than duplicated campus programs can match (e.g., a Center for English as a Second Language; or a Cooperative Learning Center to provide specialized instructional services to high school graduates with less-than-college-entry-level skills, such as the Mt. Vernon center which serves SUNY's College at Purchase).

- Cooperative professional training programs for teachers and administrators in participating colleges, aimed at increasing their information and professional skills for more effective individual, and hence institutional, performance (e.g., KCRCHE's Institute for Advanced Professional Studies in Higher Education, with its three-year cycle of semester-long seminars on perennial issues of instruction and administration, as well as on matters of crisis management).

- Central professional services for teachers and administrators -- especially individual consultation on matters of personal and professional growth and well-being, which is best done in a situation of detachment from the home campus and with relative anonymity for the client (e.g., KCRCHE's Center for Professional Development).

- Central purchasing, especially of supplies which can be ordered in very large quantities and on which it is relatively easy to get agreement on product specifications among participating institutions.

Still other forms of articulation involve a willingness on the part of participating colleges to devise common approaches to the larger educational needs of the region; for example:

- Cooperative strategies (e.g., a joint survey of community educational needs, or a joint campaign for higher educational visibility, or a joint approach to the competition created by academic interlopers from outside the region).

- Cooperative planning (e.g., using the results of a market survy as a guide to cooperative approaches to new programs designed for adult and other non-traditional learners).

- Cooperative educational information services, offering information to the general public from a single source about where the educational services they want can be found (e.g., KCRCHE's College Information Service, with a Yellow Pages listing and billboard exposure, supplemented by distribution of a course-chart showing all of the courses of study offered by metropolitan-based colleges and universities, whether KCRCHE members or not).

Finally, an urban consortium is the most efficient vehicle for negotiating access to the services of community agencies and organizations, which could be quickly exhausted by individual campus efforts; for example:

- Contractual arrangements with community organizations for professional services to participating colleges (e.g., KCRCHE's contract with the Kansas City Public Library, which houses its joint periodical bank and provides a periodical print-out service to consortium members; KCRCHE's agreement with the Kansas City Philharmonic for performance and instructional workshop services to participating campuses; its use of social work agencies for the field instruction of students in the Urban Semester).

- Coordinated approaches to the corporate community, (e.g., in search of opportunities for cooperative education placement, and in search of placements for the graduates of consortium institutions).

A final word here must be about strategy. In his 1974 report, Franklin Patterson issued the judgment that real cooperation is unlikely if a consortium has more than seven or eight members. KCRCHE's experience is otherwise. The primary obstacle to effective cooperation is the assumption that all of the consortium's members must agree on, and participate in, each program. That confers veto power and reduces activity to lowest common denominators. Our experience is that cooperation begins to be more effective when sub-clustering takes place, and when the consortium is large enough to provide substantial sub-clusters around any given cooperative opportunity. We announce the opportunity, invite member campuses to designate a representative, negotiate an agreement giving effect to the opportunity, and then invite member institutions to opt in or out on the basis of that agreement. So we are able to have a tuition remission agreement, a two-year college transfer agreement, an agreement for reciprocal student admission to campus events, and an agreement for full-time semester student exchange -- to name only four -- all without a need for the unanimous consent which would have scuttled every one of them, and each with a constituency substantial enough to make it a useful agreement.

We think effective academic articulation for urban consortia lies in this direction.

Lloyd J. Averill, Executive Director
Kansas City Regional Council for
Higher Education

Urban Observatory Program

This HUD funded city/university experiment provides a unique opportunity for consortia of colleges and universities to involve the resources of the faculty and students in the applied research issues and problems facing the administration of a local municipality. Funded originally under a concept first suggested in 1962 by Robert C. Wood, the Urban Observatory program seeks to:

1. Assist local governments obtain university resources useful for understanding and solving particular urban and metropolitan problems.

2. Achieve a coordinated program of urban research that is grounded in practical experience and application, and relevant to urban management, human resources, and environmental and developmental problems common to a number of different areas and communities.

3. Advance the ability of universities to relate research and training activities more effectively to urban concerns.

Underlying these objectives were the following three basic assumptions:

1. An institutional bridge can be built between city hall and the academic community.

2. University researchers can provide city officials with data and research support for policy making and problem solving.

3. The performance of policy and problem oriented research can contribute to the general body of knowledge in urban affairs.

Originally the first ten cities were funded under a contract signed between HUD (Department of Housing and Urban Development) and the National League of Cities on July 1, 1968. The second round cities, of which Bridgeport is one, began their work programs January 1, 1974.*

The cities incorporated in the second round of Urban Observatory program were essentially smaller cities -- between 50,000 and 250,000 -- ranging from Anchorage, Alaska and Boise, Idaho to Hoboken, New Jersey and Bridgeport, Connecticut; from Allentown, Pennsylvania and Charlottesville, North Carolina to Garland, Texas and Lake Charles, Louisiana. Each city shares the results of its research efforts with all of the other cities, insuring a useful interchange of data and information from one community to the next.

The consortium offers a unique contribution to the Urban Observatory program in that it is not dependent on a single university or college and its faculty to answer the resource needs of the municipality. In Bridgeport's case we have discovered that teams of investigators representing two or more schools have often developed far more effective and far more exciting results, as well as providing more effective interface, between the city administration and the academic community. (Note that in the first year projects, we were not as successful in involvement of interinstitutional teams.)

The Bridgeport Urban Observatory and its research activities over the last three years give some indication of the range of alternatives for community oriented research that has real life and immediate application. The projects include the following:

- "Senior Citizen Health Maintenance Outreach," Dr. Edward C. Keane, Housatonic Community College; Professor Donald E. Coonley and Professor John Chesire, Sacred Heart University.

- "Monitoring the Pattern and Performance of Land Use Allocation Systems in the City of Bridgeport," Dr. Charles J. Stokes and Dr. Stanley Schenkerman, University of Bridgeport.

*For a more lengthy discussion of the Urban Observatory program see, Williams, Lawrence A., "The Urban Observatory Program, Nation's Cities, December 1974.

- "Neighborhood Park Facilities and Recreation Program Preferences," Dr. Grant Walker, Sacred Heart University; Willard Berggren, University of Bridgeport.

- "Survey of Spanish-American Manpower in the City of Bridgeport," Dr. Hyung C. Chung, University of Bridgeport.

- "Development of Benchmarks and System for Testing Water Quality in the Bridgeport and Black Rock Harbors," Doctors Christ J. Versus, William T. Gnewuch, Ronald J. Chriss, Sacred Heart University.

- "Harbor and Waterfront Development Planning," Dr. Hyung C. Chung, University of Bridgeport.

- "Data Base Management System," Dr. Stanley Schenkerman, University of Bridgeport.

- "Vocational Education," Dr. Paul Maloney, Fairfield University; Charles A. Ekstrom, Housatonic Community College.

- "Welfare Department Administration," Dr. Charles W. Harper, Sacred Heart University; Dr. Edward C. Keane, Housatonic Community College.

- "Neighborhood Facilities and Needs Analysis," Professor John Chesire, Sacred Heart University; Dr. Kurt C. Schlichting, Fairfield University.

- "Fire Incident Data Base," Dr. Stanley Schenkerman, University of Bridgeport.

- "Pleasure Boating," George F. R. Miller, Sacred Heart University.

- "Health Surveillance of Toddler and Kindergarten Children," Joan D. Fleitas, Fairfield University; Louis G. Stier, University of Bridgeport.

- "Design and Implementation of Social Need Assessment System," Dr. Kurt C. Schlicting, Fairfield University; John Chesire, Sacred Heart University.

- "Analysis of Adult Illiteracy," Professor Joseph F. Freeman, Sacred Heart University.

To provide adequate policy development the entire program is supervised by a Policy Board, chaired by the mayor, and made up of a majority of municipal officials and representative senior academic officers from each of the colleges and universities. In addition, in order to insure the usefulness of the research and its application, each project has a "User Panel," a group of individuals both from within the municipality and the community who meet regularly with the investigators to assist in the monitoring of the product and in the development of the end results. The investigator still maintains the principal responsibility for the recommendations.

We have discovered that the most useful purpose of the User Panel, however, has been in putting into operation -- well before the report is finished -- many of the recommendations contained in the final report. A recently completed study of the management of the Welfare Department, which the director of the Office of Humane Affairs says saved the city a million dollars annually, has 90% of its major recommendations already in place and the report itself has yet to be printed. The User Panels have consistently been more useful than the Policy Board -- a factor not necessarily true in all Observatories.

The Urban Observatory has been a happy marriage between faculty and students on the one hand and the department heads of the municipality seeking real life, day-to-day solutions to critical problems which they are facing. The consortium has provided a dimension and a depth of resource which would not have been available had the project centered in a single college or university.

Dr. H. Parker Lansdale
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